

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for providing to persons who experience periods of delay or waiting returnable items of entertainment, comprising:
providing dispensing apparatus structured to selectively dispense at least one item of entertainment with pre-addressed, postage-paid return indicia;
purchasing a said item of entertainment from said dispensing apparatus;
depositing said item of entertainment for return following use of said item of entertainment; and
processing a refund or credit in response to the return of said item of entertainment.
2. The method according to claim 1 further comprising providing said pre-addressed, postage-paid indicia on an enclosure sized to receive said item of entertainment and placing said item of entertainment in said enclosure for return.
3. The method according to claim 1 further comprising providing access to account information for monitoring purchases and credits or refunds.
4. The method according to claim 1 wherein said purchasing of said item of entertainment is effected by insertion of money into said dispensing apparatus.
5. The method according to claim 1 wherein said purchasing of said item of entertainment is effected by insertion of tokens into said dispensing apparatus.

6. The method according to claim 1 wherein said purchasing of said item of entertainment is effected by electronically accessing and processing a credit card via said dispensing apparatus.

7. The method according to claim 1 wherein said purchasing of said item of entertainment is effected by electronically accessing and processing a debit card via said dispensing apparatus.

8. The method accordingly to claim 1 wherein said depositing of said item of entertainment is effected by placing said item of entertainment in an on-site depository associated with said dispensing apparatus.

9. The method according to claim 1 wherein said depositing of said item of entertainment is effected by placing said item of entertainment in a postal receiving depository for return in accordance with said pre-addressed indicia.

10. The method according to claim 1 further comprising receiving said item of entertainment in a warehouse following depositing of said item for return, and processing said returned item of entertainment for restocking in said dispensing apparatus.

11. The method according to claim 1 wherein said processing of a refund or credit comprises accepting input data into said dispensing apparatus upon deposit of

said item of entertainment to said dispensing apparatus, acknowledging receipt of said item and determining an amount of refund or credit allowed to the purchaser.

12. The method according to claim 11 further comprising the refund of cash by said dispensing apparatus.

13. The method according to claim 11 further comprising the electronic crediting of a determined sum to an established purchaser account.

14. The method according to claim 13 further comprising processing said electronic crediting to initiate a cash refund for postal delivery.

15. The method according to claim 11 further comprising the electronic crediting of a determined sum to a credit card.

16. The method according to claim 1 wherein said processing of a refund or credit comprises entering into a database system data provided with the return of said item of entertainment through postal delivery services thereby acknowledging receipt of said item and determining an amount of refund or credit allowed to the purchaser.

17. The method according to claim 16 further comprising the crediting of a determined sum to an established purchaser account for application against future purchases.

18. The method according to claim 16 further comprising processing said crediting to initiate a cash refund for postal delivery.

19. The method according to claim 16 further comprising the crediting of a determined sum to a credit card.

20. A dispensing apparatus for providing items of entertainment and related articles in venues where delays or waiting is experienced, comprising:
a housing sized for retaining a selected inventory of vendable items of entertainment and related articles;
a display element for viewing at least a portion of said selected inventory of vendable items retained within said housing;
a control panel for use in selecting a said item of entertainment for vending from said housing;
at least one payment acceptance device; and
a delivery port for receiving a selected item of entertainment vended from said housing.

21. The dispensing apparatus of claim 20 further comprising a deposit slot for receiving a returned item of entertainment.

22. The dispensing apparatus of claim 21 wherein said deposit slot is configured with electronic apparatus for sensing and processing data borne on said item of entertainment enabling acknowledgment of return of said item.

23. The dispensing apparatus of claim 20 wherein said display element is an electronic monitor capable of displaying selected information relating to said items of entertainment.

24. The dispensing apparatus of claim 20 wherein said control panel further comprises a keyboard providing for entry of data.

25. The dispensing apparatus of claim 20 wherein said at least one payment acceptance device comprises a money slot sized to receive currency.

26. The dispensing apparatus of claim 20 wherein said at least one payment acceptance device comprises a coin slot sized to receive currency tokens.

27. The dispensing apparatus of claim 20 wherein said at least one payment acceptance device comprises a credit card acceptance device.

28. The dispensing apparatus of claim 20 wherein said at least one payment acceptance device comprises an electronic remote sensing device for receiving wireless signals from a generating device providing payment information.